GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4230
ANSWERED ON:18.12.2001
BT COTTON SEEDS
S. SAIDUZZAMAN

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Department of Biotechnology is responsible for control of release of BT Cotton seeds etc.;

(b) whether it is correct that it has failed in ensuring the BT Cotton seeds release which has been grown extensively in Gujarat etc., as reported in the Times of India dated 9.11.2001;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the action taken by the Government to fix responsibility in the matter ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT)

(a) No Sir, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) is only a recommendatory body through its Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) under the Rules-1989 issued by the Ministry of Environment & Forests on `Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms, Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells` of Environment (Protection) Act (EPA), 1986. The RCGM examines biosafety issues while conducting the research and developmental work on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and products thereof. The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) set up in the Ministry of Environment & Forests under Rules-1989, is responsible for approvals for large scale field trials and commercial release of GMOs.

(b),(c) & (d): M/s. Navbharat Seeds Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad hadmarketed transgenic Bt cotton seeds in Gujarat without any biosafety assessment by the RCGM and withoutobtaining the approval from the GEAC. The Government has lodged a complaint against M/s. Navbharat Seeds Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad in the Metropolitan Magistrate Court in Ahmedabad on 12.11.2001 for penal action for violating the EPA, 1986.